REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 10 and 12-17 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, each of independent claims 1, 6 and 12 are amended. Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes to the claims by the current Amendment. The attachment is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE".

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3, 5-7, 10 and 12-17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,380,488 to Wakatake in view of U.S. Patent 4,168,004 to Owen. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 recites a biochemical analyzer that includes a specimen introducing part, a specimen rack conveying part, a reexamining buffer and a specimen storage part. The reexamining buffer for temporarily storing the specimen rack for reanalysis. Claim 1 also recites that the analyzing parts and the reexamining buffer are located between the specimen introducing part and the specimen storage part in line and being coupled to one another by means of the specimen rack conveying part in rear of the analyzing parts and the reexamining buffer. Claim 1 further recites the specimen rack conveying part conveys the specimen rack introduced by the introducing part to any of the analyzing parts, the reexamining buffer and the specimen storage part, and also conveys the specimen rack to be reexamined from the reexamining buffer to any of the analyzing parts under the control of a control part for controlling conveyance of the specimen rack.

With this type of configuration, even though the parts are independent from one another and can be solely removed, the apparatus may externally appear as a continuous and integral unit. Accordingly, the specimen introducing part, the specimen storage part, the analyzing parts and the reexamining buffer may be mounted on the specimen rack and conveying part after the length of the specimen conveying part is set to a predetermined value. The specimen rack conveying part may reciprocally convey the specimen rack under control of a control part. Thus, the specimen rack may be temporarily stored in the reexamining buffer after the specimen rack is completely analyzed. The specimen rack (to be reexamined) may

then be conveyed to the analyzing parts from the reexamining buffer for reanalysis. The conveyance may be controlled by the control part.

Wakatake does not teach or suggest the reexamining buffer and the specimen rack conveying part for reciprocally conveying a specimen rack. Wakatake discloses a plurality of analyzers D1, D2 and a feed stocker Y1 and a treated container stocker Y4. Wakatake also discloses a conveyor line that is discrete at the analyzers. Therefore, if one analyzer is removed, the conveyor line would become inoperative. Further, since the conveying line includes a rack feed line 10 and a rack conveying line 20 (among the analyzers having a long inward depth), the external appearance of the entire system is not continuous and one-unit body-like). Moreover, the lines 10, 20 are controlled by individual control parts. Not germane

Accordingly, Wakatake does not teach or suggest a specimen rack conveying part for reciprocally conveying the specimen rack, a reexamining buffer for temporary storing the specimen rack for reanalysis, and that the analyzing parts and the reexamining buffer are located between the specimen introducing part and the specimen storage part in line, and are coupled to one another by means of the specimen rack conveying part in rear of the analyzing parts and the reexamining buffer. Owen does not teach or suggest these features of claim 1 missing from Wakataka. Accordingly, independent claim 1 defines patentable subject matter.

Each of independent claims 6 and 12 defines patentable subject matter for at least similar reasons as claim 1. Claims 3 and 5 depend from claim 1, claim 10 depends from claim 6 and claims 13-17 depend from claim 12 and therefore also define patentable subject matter. Withdrawal of the outstanding rejection is respectfully requested.

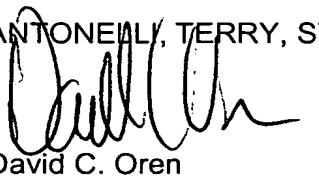
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above- identified application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 10 and 12-17 are respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 500.37156CX1) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP



David C. Oren
Registration No. 38,694

1300 North Seventeenth Street
Suite 1800
Arlington, VA 22209
Tel.: 703-312-6600
Fax.: 703-312-6666

DCO/slk

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 6 and 12 have been amended as follows:

1. (Three Times Amended) A biochemical analyzer for automatically analyzing a specimen, comprising a specimen introducing part for introducing a specimen rack, a specimen rack conveying part for reciprocally conveying said specimen rack received from the specimen introducing part[,] to at least two analyzing parts [having different functions and applied with function identification parts for allowing an operator to confirm one of the analyzing parts to be intended to be used, said analyzing parts] pipetting specimens on the specimen rack and allowing the specimens to react with reagents so as to analyze the specimens, a reexamining buffer for temporarily storing the specimen rack for reanalysis, and a specimen storage part for storing the specimen rack for which the pipetting is completed, the analyzing parts and the reexamining buffer being located between the specimen introducing part and the specimen storage part in line, and being coupled to one another by means of the specimen rack conveying part in rear of the analyzing parts and the reexamining buffer, the specimen introducing part, the rack conveying part, the analyzing parts and the specimen storage [parts] part being independent from each other and being arranged on a floor so that each of them is solely removable, and the specimen introducing part, the analyzing parts and the specimen storage part being arranged and coupled along the longitudinal direction of the specimen conveying part having heights measured from the floor, which are substantially equal to one another, and depths which are substantially equal to one another, wherein [said analyzing parts have front surfaces, and said identification parts are projected from the front surface of the analyzing parts, and the

identification parts have colors different from each other] the specimen rack conveying part conveys the specimen rack introduced by the introducing part to any of the analyzing parts, the reexamining buffer and the specimen storage part, and also conveys the specimen rack to be reexamined from the reexamining buffer to any of the analyzing parts under the control of a control part for controlling conveyance of the specimen rack.

6. (Three Times Amended) A biochemical analyzer for automatically analyzing a specimen, comprising a specimen introducing part for introducing a specimen rack, a specimen rack conveying part for conveying said specimen rack received from the specimen introducing part[,] to at least two analyzing parts having different functions [and applied with function identification parts for allowing an operator to confirm one of the analyzing parts to be intended to be used], said analyzing parts pipetting a specimen on the specimen rack and allowing the specimen to react with a reagent so as to analyze the specimen, a reexamining buffer for temporarily storing the specimen rack for reanalysis, a specimen storage part for storing the specimen rack for which the pipetting is completed, the analyzing parts and the reexamined buffer being arranged between the specimen introducing part and the specimen storage part in line, and being coupled to one another by means of the specimen storage rack conveying part in rear of the analyzing parts and the reexamining buffer, the specimen introducing part, the rack conveying part, the analyzing parts and the specimen storage [parts] part being independent from each other, and the specimen introducing part, the analyzing parts and the specimen storage part having widthwise dimensions which are multiples of the longitudinal length of the specimen rack, including 1, wherein [said analyzing parts have front surfaces, and said identification parts are projected from the front surface of the

analyzing parts, and the identification parts have colors different from each other] the specimen rack conveying part conveys the specimen rack to any of the analyzing parts, the reexamining buffer and the specimen storage rack, and also conveys the specimen rack to be reexamined from the reexamining buffer to any of the analyzing parts under the control of a control part for controlling conveyance of the specimen rack.

12. (Three Times Amended) A biochemical analyzer comprising an introducing part for introducing a specimen, a storage part for storing the specimen, [and] at least two analyzing parts [having different functions and applied with function identification parts for allowing an operator to confirm one of the analyzing parts to be intended to be used,] for allowing the specimen to react with a reagent so as to analyze the specimen, wherein stages are provided on the top surface sides of at least the analyzing parts, at positions where the operator carries out confirmation, adjustment and replacement during analysis and at a height of 850 to 950 mm measured from a floor on which the biochemical analyzer is set, a reexamining buffer for temporarily storing the specimen rack for reanalysis, and a specimen rack conveying means for reciprocally conveying the specimen rack introduced by the introducing part, the analyzing parts and the reexamined buffer being arranged between the specimen introducing part and the specimen storage part in line, and being coupled to one another by means of the specimen storage rack conveying part in rear of the analyzing parts and the reexamining buffer, wherein [said analyzing parts have front surfaces, and said identification parts are projected from the front surface of the analyzing parts, and the identification parts have colors different from each other] the specimen rack conveying part conveys the specimen rack introduced by the introducing part to any of the analyzing parts, the reexamining buffer and the

specimen storage rack, and also conveys the specimen rack to be reexamined from the reexamining buffer to any of the analyzing parts under the control of a control part for controlling conveyance of the specimen rack.